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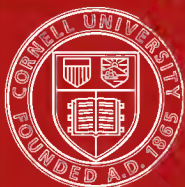
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The Golden Hynde, and other poems.



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**THE GOLDEN HYNDE**  
**AND OTHER POEMS**



THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

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TORONTO

# THE GOLDEN HYNDE

AND OTHER POEMS

BY

ALFRED NOYES

AUTHOR OF "POEMS," "THE FLOWER OF  
OLD JAPAN," ETC.

New York

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

1917

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To

MY AMERICAN WIFE



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**THE GOLDEN HYNDE**  
**AND OTHER POEMS**



## THE *GOLDEN HYNDE*

### I

WITH the fruit of Aladdin's Garden clustering  
thick in her hold,  
With rubies a-wash in her scuppers and her  
bilge a-blaze with gold,  
A world in arms behind her to sever her heart  
from home,  
The *Golden Hynde* drove onward, over the glit-  
tering foam.

### II

If we go, as we came, by the Southward, we  
meet wi' the fleets of Spain!  
'Tis a thousand to one against us; we'll turn  
to the West again;  
We have captured a China pilot, his charts and  
his golden keys;

We'll sail to the golden Gateway, over the  
golden seas.

## III

What shall we see as we sail there? Clusters  
of coral and palm,  
Oceans of silken slumber, measureless leagues  
of calm,  
Islands of purple story, lit with the Westering  
gleam,  
Washed by the unknown whisper, dreaming  
the world-wide dream.

## IV

There will be shores of sirens, with arms that  
beckon us near,  
As they stand knee-deep in the foam-flowers,  
with perilous breasts and hair;  
Sweet is the rest they proffer; but what shall  
we gain of these



When we gaze on the golden Gateway that  
shines on the golden seas?

## v

Wound in their white embraces, couched in the  
lustrous gloom,  
Gazing ever to seaward thro' the broad mag-  
nolia bloom,  
We should weary of all their kisses when, under  
the first white star,  
Over the limitless ocean, the golden Gates unbar.

## vi

White arms will strive to hold us; but we shall  
rise and go  
Down to the salt sea-beaches where the waves  
are whispering low:  
White arms will plead in anguish as the sails fill  
out to the breeze,  
And we turn to the golden Gateway that burns  
on the golden seas!

## VII

We shall put out from shore then, out to the  
Western skies,  
With the old despairing rapture and the sunset  
in our eyes!  
What shall we gain of our going, what of the  
fading gleam,  
What of the gathering darkness, what of the  
dying dream?

## VIII

Only the unknown glory, only the hope deferred,  
Only the wondrous whisper, only the unknown  
Word,  
Voice of the God that gave us billow and beam  
and breeze,  
As we sail to the golden Gateway, over the  
golden seas.

## AT DAWN

O Hesper-Phosphor, far away,  
Shining, the first, the last white star,  
Hear'st thou the strange, the ghostly cry,  
That moan of an ancient agony  
From purple forest to golden sky  
Shivering over the breathless bay?  
It is not the wind that wakes with the day;  
For see, the gulls that wheel and call,  
Beyond the tumbling white-topped bar,  
Catching the sun-dawn on their wings,  
Like snow-flakes or like rose-leaves fall,  
Flutter and fall in airy rings;  
And drift, like lilies ruffling into blossom  
Upon some golden lake's unwrinkled bosom.

Are not the forest's deep-lashed fringes wet  
With tears? Is not the voice of all regret

Breaking out of the dark earth's heart?  
She too, she too, has loved and lost; and we —  
We that remember our lost Arcady,  
Have we not known, we too,  
The primal greenwood's arch of blue,  
The radiant clouds at sunrise curled  
Around the brows of the golden world;  
The marble temples, washed with dew,  
To which with rosy limbs aflame  
The violet-eyed Thalassian came,  
Came, pitiless, only to display  
How soon the youthful splendour dies away;  
Came only to depart  
Laughing across the grey-grown bitter sea;  
For each man's life is earth's epitome,  
And though the years bring more than aught  
they take,  
Yet might his heart and hers well break  
Remembering how one prayer must still be vain,

How one fair hope is dead,  
One passion quenched, one glory fled  
With those first loves that never come again.

How many years, how many generations,  
Have heard that sigh in the dawn,  
When the dark earth yearns to the unforgotten  
nations

And the old loves withdrawn,  
Old loves, old lovers, wonderful and unnumbered  
As waves on the wine-dark sea.

'Neath the tall white towers of Troy and the  
temples that slumbered  
In Thessaly?

From the beautiful palaces, from the miracu-  
lous portals,

The swift white feet are flown!  
They were taintless of dust, the proud, the  
peerless Immortals

As they sped to their loftier throne!  
Perchance they are there, earth dreams, on the  
shores of Hesper,  
Her rosy-bosomed Hours,  
Listening the wild fresh forest's enchanted  
whisper,  
Crowned with its new strange flowers;  
Listening the great new ocean's triumphant  
thunder  
On the stainless unknown shore,  
While that perilous queen of the world's delight  
and wonder  
Comes white from the foam once more.

When the mists divide with the dawn o'er those  
glittering waters,  
Do they gaze over uncared seas —  
Naiad and nymph and the woodland's rose-  
crowned daughters

And the Oceanides?

Do they sing together, perchance, in that diamond splendour,

That world of dawn and dew,

With eyelids twitching to tears and with eyes grown tender

The sweet old songs they knew,

The songs of Greece? Ah, with harp-strings mute do they falter

As the earth like a small star pales?

When the heroes launch their ship by the smoking altar

Does a memory lure their sails?

Far, far away, do their hearts resume the story

That never on earth was told,

When all those urgent oars on the waste of glory

Cast up its gold?

Are not the forest fringes wet

With tears? Is not the voice of all regret

Breaking out of the dark earth's heart?

She too, she too, has loved and lost; and though

She turned last night in disdain

Away from the sunset-embers,

From her soul she can never depart;

She can never depart from her pain.

Vainly she strives to forget;

Beautiful in her woe,

She awakes in the dawn and remembers.



## A SEVENTIETH BIRTHDAY

(IN HONOUR OF ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE)

(*B. April 5, 1837*)

### I

HE needs no crown of ours, whose golden heart  
Poured out its wealth so freely in pure praise  
Of others: him the imperishable bays  
Crown, and on Sunium's height he sits apart:  
He hears immortal greetings this great morn,  
Fain would we bring, we also, all we may,  
Some wayside flower of transitory bloom,  
Frail tribute only born  
To greet the gladness of this April day —  
Then waste on Death's dark wind its faint  
perfume.

### II

Here, on this April day, the whole sweet Spring  
Speaks thro' his music only, or seems to speak;

And we that hear, with hearts uplift and weak,  
What can we more than claim him for our king?  
Here, on this April day (and many a time  
Shall Spring return and find him singing still)  
He is one with the world's great heart  
beyond the years,  
One with the pulsing rhyme  
Of tides that work some heavenly rhythmic  
will  
And hold the secret of all human tears.

## III

For he, the last of that immortal race  
Whose music like a robe of living light  
Re-clothed each new-born age and made it  
bright  
As with the glory of Love's transfiguring face,  
Reddened earth's roses, kindled the deep blue  
Of England's radiant ever-singing sea,

Recalled the white Thalassian from the foam  
Woke the dim stars anew  
And triumphed in the triumph of Liberty,  
We claim him; but he hath not here his  
home.

## IV

Not here! Round him to-day the clouds divide.  
We know what faces thro' that rose-flushed air  
Now bend above him — Shelley's face is there,  
And Hugo's lit with more than kingly pride;  
Replenished there with splendour the blind eyes  
Of Milton bend from heaven to meet his own;  
Sappho is there crowned with those queen-  
lier flowers  
Whose graft outgrew our skies,  
His gift: Shakespeare leans earthward from  
his throne  
With hands outstretched. He needs no  
crown of ours.

## THE NET OF VULCAN

### I

FROM peaks that clove the heavens asunder  
The hunch-back god with sooty claws  
Loomed o'er the night, a cloud of thunder,  
And hurled the net of mortal laws;  
It flew, and all the world grew dimmer;  
Its blackness blotted out the stars,  
Then fell across the rosy glimmer  
That told where Venus couched with Mars.

### II

And, when the steeds that draw the morning  
Spurned from their Orient hooves the spray,  
All vainly soared the lavrock, warning  
Those tangled lovers of the day:  
Still with those twin white waves in blossom

Against the warrior's rock-broad breast,  
The netted light of the foam-born bosom  
Breathed like a sea at rest.

## III

And light was all that followed after,  
Light the derision of the sky,  
Light the divine Olympian laughter  
Of kindlier gods in days gone by:  
Low to her lover whispered Venus,  
'The shameless net be praised for this —  
When night herself no more could screen us  
It snared us one more hour of bliss.'

## ORPHEUS AND EURYDICE

### I

CLOUD upon cloud, the purple pinewoods clung  
to the rich Arcadian mountains,  
Holy-sweet as a column of incense, where  
Eurydice roamed and sung :  
All the hues of the gates of heaven flashed from  
The white enchanted fountains  
Where in the flowery glades of the forest the  
rivers that sing to Arcadia sprung.

White as a shining marble Dryad, supple and  
sweet as a rose in blossom,  
Fair and fleet as a fawn that shakes the dew  
from the fern at break of day,  
Wreathed with the clouds of her dusky hair that  
kissed and clung to her sun-bright bosom,

Down to the valley she came, and the sound  
of her feet was the bursting of flowers in  
May.

Down to the valley she came, for far and far be-  
low in the dreaming meadows  
Pleaded ever the Voice of voices, calling his  
love by her golden name;  
So she arose from her home in the hills, and down  
through the blossoms that danced with  
their shadows,  
Out of the blue of the dreaming distance,  
down to the heart of her lover she came.

Red were the lips that hovered above her lips in  
the flowery haze of the June-day,  
Red as a rose through the perfumed mist of  
passion that reeled before her eyes;  
Strong the smooth young sunburnt arms that

folded her heart to his heart in the noon-  
day,

Strong and supple with throbbing sunshine  
under the blinding southern skies.

Ah, the kisses, the little murmurs, mad with pain  
for their phantom fleetness,

Mad with pain for the passing of love that  
lives, they dreamed — as we dream — for  
an hour!

Ah, the sudden tempest of passion, mad with  
pain for its oversweetness.

As petal by petal and pang by pang their love  
broke out into perfect flower.

Ah, the wonder as once he wakened, out of a  
dream of remembered blisses,

Couched in the meadows of dreaming blossom  
to feel, like the touch of a flower on his  
eyes,



Cool and fresh with the fragrant dews of dawn  
the touch of her light swift kisses,  
Shed from the shadowy rose of her face be-  
tween his face and the warm blue skies.

## II

Lost in his new desire  
He dreamed away the hours;  
His lyre  
Lay buried in the flowers:  
  
To whom the King of Heaven,  
Apollo, lord of light  
Had given  
Such beauty, love, and might:  
  
Might, if he would, to slay  
All evil dreams and pierce  
The grey  
Veil of the Universe;

With love that holds in one  
Sacred and ancient bond

The sun

And all the vast beyond;

And beauty to enthrall  
The soul of man to heaven:

Yea, all

Such gifts was Orpheus given.

Yet in his dream's desire  
He drowsed away the hours:

His lyre

Lay buried in the flowers.

Then in his wrath arose  
Apollo, lord of light,

That shows

The wrong deed from the right;

And by what radiant laws

O'erruling human needs

The cause

To consequence proceeds;

How balanced is the sway

He gives each mortal doom;

How day

Demands the atoning gloom:

How all good things await

The soul that pays the price

To fate

By equal sacrifice;

And how on him that sleeps

For less than labour's sake

There creeps,

Uncharmed, the Pythian snake.

## III

Lulled by the wash of the feathery grasses, a sea  
with many a sun-swept billow,  
Heart to heart in the heart of the summer,  
lover by lover asleep they lay,  
Hearing only the whirring cicada that chirruped  
awhile at their popped pillow  
Faint and sweet as the murmur of men that  
laboured in villages far away.

Was not the menace indeed more silent? Ah,  
what care for labour and sorrow?  
Gods in the meadows of moly and amaranth  
surely might envy their deep sweet bed  
Here where the butterflies troubled the lilies of  
peace, and took no thought for the mor-  
row,  
And golden-girdled bees made feast as over  
the lotos the soft sun spread.

Nearer, nearer the menace glided, out of the  
gorgeous gloom around them,

Out of the poppy-haunted shadows deep in  
the heart of the purple brake;

Till through the hush and the heat as they lay,  
and their own sweet listless dreams en-  
wound them, —

Mailed and mottled with hues of the grape-  
bloom suddenly, quietly, glided the snake.

Subtle as jealousy, supple as falsehood, diamond-  
headed and cruel as pleasure,

Coil by coil he lengthened and glided, straight  
to the fragrant curve of her throat:

There in the print of the last of the kisses that  
still glowed red from the sweet long pres-  
sure,

Fierce as famine and swift as lightning over  
the glittering lyre he smote.

## IV

And over the cold white body of love and delight

Orpheus arose in the terrible storm of his  
grief,

With quivering up-clutched hands, deadly and  
white;

And his whole soul wavered and shook like a  
wind-swept leaf:

As a leaf that beats on a mountain, his spirit in  
vain

Assaulted his doom and beat on the Gates of  
Death:

Then prone with his arms o'er the lyre he sobbed  
out his pain,

And the tense chords faintly gave voice to the  
pulse of his breath.

And he heard it and rose, once again, with the  
lyre in his hand,

And smote out the cry that his white-lipped  
sorrow denied:

And the grief's mad ecstasy swept o'er the sum-  
mer-sweet land,

And gathered the tears of all Time in the rush  
of its tide.

There was never a love forsaken or faith for-  
sworn,

There was never a cry for the living or moan  
for the slain,

But was voiced in that great consummation of  
song; ay, and borne

To storm on the Gates of the land whence none  
cometh again.

Transcending the barriers of earth, comprehend-  
ing them all,

He followed the soul of his loss with the night  
in his eyes;

And the portals lay bare to him there; and he  
heard the faint call

Of his love o'er the rabble that wails by the  
river of sighs.

Yea, there in the mountains before him he knew  
it of old,

That portal enormous of gloom, he had seen it  
in dreams,

When the secrets of Time and of Fate through  
his harmonies rolled;

And behind it he heard the dead moan by  
their desolate streams.

And he passed through the Gates with the light  
and the cloud of his song,

Dry-shod over Lethe he passed to the chasms  
of Hell;

And the hosts of the dead made mock at him,  
crying, how long



Have we dwelt in the darkness, oh fool, and  
shall evermore dwell?

Did our lovers not love us? the grey skulls  
hissed in his face;

Were our lips not red? Were these cavernous  
eyes not bright?

Yet us, whom the soft flesh clothed with such  
roseate grace,

Our lovers would loathe if we ever returned  
to their sight!

Oh then, through the soul of the Singer, a pity  
so vast

Mixed with his anguish that, smiting anew  
on his lyre,

He caught up the sorrows of hell in his utterance  
at last,

Comprehending the need of them all in his  
own great desire.

## V

And they that were dead, in his radiant music,  
heard the moaning of doves in the olden  
Golden-girdled purple pinewood, heard the  
moan of the roaming sea;

Heard the chant of the soft-winged songsters,  
nesting now in the fragrant golden  
Olden haunted blossoming bowers, of lovers  
that wandered in Arcady;

Saw the soft blue veils of shadow floating over  
the billowy grasses  
Under the crisp white curling clouds that  
sailed and trailed through the melting  
blue;

Heard once more the quarrel of lovers above  
them pass, as a lark-song passes,  
Light and bright, till it vanished away in  
an eyebright heaven of silvery dew.

White as a dream of Aphrodite, supple and sweet  
as a rose in blossom,

Fair and fleet as a fawn that shakes the dew  
from the fern at break of day;

Wreathed with the clouds of her dusky hair, that  
kissed and clung to her sun-bright bosom,  
On through the deserts of hell she came, and  
the brown air bloomed with the light of  
May.

On through the deserts of hell she came; for  
over the fierce and frozen meadows

Pleaded ever the Voice of voices, calling his  
love by her golden name;

So she arose from her grave in the darkness,  
and up through the wailing fires and  
shadows,

On by chasm and cliff and cavern, out of the  
horrors of death she came.

Then had she followed him, then had he won her,  
striking a chord that should echo for ever,  
Had he been steadfast only a little, nor  
paused in the great transcendent song;  
But ere they had won to the glory of day, he  
came to the brink of the flaming river  
And ceased, to look on his love a moment, a  
little moment, and over long.

## VI

O'er Phlegethon he stood:  
Below him roared and flamed  
The flood  
For utmost anguish named.  
  
And lo, across the night,  
The shining form he knew  
With light  
Swift footsteps upward drew.

Up through the desolate lands

She stole, a ghostly star,

With hands

Outstretched to him afar.

With arms outstretched, she came

In yearning majesty,

The same

Royal Eurydice.

Up through the ghastly dead

She came, with shining eyes

And red

Sweet lips of child-surprise.

Up through the wizened crowds

She stole, as steals the moon

Through clouds

Of flowery mist in June.

He gazed: he ceased to smite

The golden-chorded lyre:

Delight

Consumed his heart with fire.

Though in that deadly land

His task was but half-done,

His hand

Drooped, and the fight half won.

He saw the breasts that glowed,

The fragrant clouds of hair ;

They flowed

Around him like a snare.

*O'er Phlegethon he stood,*

*For utmost anguish named :*

*The flood*

*Below him roared and flamed*

Out of his hand the lyre

Suddenly slipped and fell :

The fire

Acclaimed it into hell.

The night grew dark again:

There came a bitter cry

Of pain,

Oh, Love, once more I die !

And lo, the earth-dawn broke,

And like a wraith she fled:

He woke

Alone: his love was dead.

He woke on earth: the day

Shone coldly: at his side

There lay

The body of his bride.

VII

Only now when the purple vintage bubbles and  
winks in the autumn glory,

Only now when the great white oxen drag the  
weight of the harvest home,

Sunburnt labourers, under the star of the sunset,  
sing as an old-world story  
How two pale and thwarted lovers ever  
through Arcady still must roam.

Faint as the silvery mists of morning over the  
peaks that the noonday parches,  
On through the haunts of the gloaming musk-  
rose, down to the rivers that glisten be-  
low,  
Ever they wander from meadow to pinewood,  
under the whispering woodbine arches,  
Faint as the mist of the dews of the dusk  
when violets dream and the moon-winds  
blow.

Though the golden lute of Orpheus gathered the  
splendours of earth and heaven,  
All the golden greenwood notes and all the  
chimes of the changing sea,



Old men over the fires of winter murmur again  
that he was not given

The steadfast heart divine to rule that infinite  
freedom of harmony.

Therefore he failed, say they; but we, that have  
no wisdom, can only remember

How through the purple perfumed pinewoods  
white Eurydice roamed and sung:

How through the whispering gold of the wheat,  
where the poppy burned like a crimson  
ember,

Down to the valley in beauty she came, and  
under her coming the flowers up-sprung.

Down to the valley she came, for far and far  
below in the dreaming meadows

Pleaded ever the Voice of voices, calling his  
love by her golden name;

So she arose from her home in the hills, and  
down through the blossoms that danced  
with their shadows

Out of the blue of the dreaming distance,  
down to the heart of her lover she came.

## FROM THE SHORE

### I

LOVE, so strangely lost and found,  
Love, beyond these Gates of Death,  
Love, immortally re-crowned,  
Love, who swayest this mortal breath,  
Sweetlier to thy lover's ear  
Steals the tale that ne'er was told:  
Bright-eyes, ah, thine arms are near,  
Nearer now than e'er of old.

### II

When on earth thy hands were mine,  
Mine to hold for evermore,  
Oft we watched the sunset shine  
Lonelier from this wave-beat shore;  
Pent in prison-cells of clay

Time had power on thee and me,  
Thou and heaven are one to-day  
One with earth and sky and sea.

## III

Indivisible and one  
Beauty hath unlocked the gate,  
Oped the portals of the sun,  
Burst the bars of Time and Fate:  
Violets in the dawn of Spring  
Hold the secret of thine eyes;  
Lilies bare their breasts and fling  
Scents of thee from Paradise.

## IV

Brooklets have thy talk by rote,  
Thy farewells array the West;  
Fur that clasped thee round the throat  
Leaps — a squirrel — to its nest:  
Backward from a sparkling eye,

Half-forgotten jests return  
Where the rabbit lollops by  
Hurry-scurry through the fern.

## V

Roses where I lonely pass,  
Brush my brow and breathe thy kiss;  
Zephyrs whispering through the grass  
Lure me on from bliss to bliss;  
Here thy robe is rustling close,  
There thy fluttering lace is blown;  
All the tide of beauty flows  
Tributary to thine own.

## VI

Birds that sleek their shining throats  
Capture every curve from thee,  
All their golden warbled notes —  
Fragments of thy melody —  
Crowding, clustering, one by one,

Build it upward, spray by spray,  
Till the lavrock in the sun  
Pours thy rapture down the day.

## VII

Silver birch and purple pine,  
Crumpled fern and crimson rose  
Flash to feel their beauty thine,  
Clasp and fold thee, warm and close;  
Every beat and gleam of wings  
Holds thee in its bosom furled,  
All that chatters, laughs and sings  
Darts thy sparkle round the world.

## VIII

*Love, so strangely lost and found,*  
*Love, beyond these Gates of Death,*  
*Love, immortally re-crowned,*  
*Love, who swayest this mortal breath,*

*Sweetlier to thy lover's ear*

*Steals the tale that ne'er was told:*

*Bright-eyes, ah, thine arms are near,*

*Nearer now than e'er of old.*

## THE RETURN

### I

O HEDGES white with laughing may,  
O meadows where we met,  
This heart of mine must break to-day  
Unless ye, too, forget.

### II

Breathe not so sweet, breathe not so sweet,  
But swiftly let me pass  
Across the fields that felt her feet  
In the old time that was!

### III

A year ago, but one brief year,  
O happy flowering land,  
We wandered here and whispered there  
And hand was warm in hand.



## IV

O crisp white clouds beyond the hill,  
O lavrock in the skies,  
Why do ye all remember still  
Her bright uplifted eyes?

## V

Red heather on the windy moor,  
Wild thyme beside the way,  
White jasmine by the cottage door,  
Harden your hearts to-day.

## VI

Smile not so kind, smile not so kind,  
Thou happy, haunted place,  
Or thou wilt strike these poor eyes blind  
With her remembered face.

## ON A RAILWAY PLATFORM

A DRIZZLE of drifting rain

And a blurred white lamp o'er head,  
That shines as my love will shine again,  
In the world of the dead.

Round me the wet black night,

And, afar in the limitless gloom,  
Crimson and green, two blossoms of light,  
Two stars of doom.

But the night of death is a-flare

With a torch of back-blown fire  
And the coal-black deeps of the quivering air  
Rend for my soul's desire.

Leap, heart, for the pulse and the roar

And the lights of the streaming train

That leaps with the heart of thy love once more  
Out of the mist and the rain;

For the thousand panes of light  
And the faces pale with mist  
Streaming out of the desolate night  
In ruby and amethyst;

Out of the desolate years  
The thundering pageant flows;  
But I see no more than a window of tears  
Which her face has turned to a rose.

AN OLD SONG ENDED

*How should I your true love know*

*From another one? —*

*By his cockle-hat and staff*

*And his sandal shoon. —*

Wherefore hath he roamed so far,

Lady, from your hand? —

Love's a pilgrim, and he comes

Out of Holy Land. —

Nay; but he is dead, lady,

He is dead and gone: —

Seek his grave and lay your face

Down upon the stone. —

Shall I find him if he sleep

In a nameless grave

Where over many and many an one

The tall wet grasses wave? —

Breathe my name whereas you go.

If you hear a sound

Struggling like a stifled cry

Underneath the ground,

Whisper but a word to him,

Tell him my despair:

If he riseth from the dead,

Then my love is there.

## LOVE'S GHOST

### I

THY house is dark and still: I stand once more

Beside the marble door.

It opens as of old! Thy pale, pale face

Peers thro' the narrow space.

Thy hands are mine, thy hands are mine to hold,

Just as of old.

### II

'Hush! hush! or God will hear us! Ah, speak

low

As Love spake long ago.'

'Sweet, sweet, are these thine arms, thy breast,

thy hair

Assuaging my despair,

Assuaging the long thirst, quenching the tears

Of all these years?

## III

'Thy house is deep and still: God cannot hear;  
Sweet, have no fear!  
Are not thy cold lips crushed against my kiss?  
Love gives us this,  
Not God'; but 'Ah,' she moans, 'God hears us!  
Speak,  
Speak low, hide cheek on cheek.'

## IV

O, then what eager whisperings, hoarded long,  
Too sweet for any song,  
What treasured news to tell, what hopes, what  
fears,  
Gleaned from the barren years,  
What raptures wrung from out the heart of pain,  
What wild farewells again.

## V

Whose pity is this? Ah, quick, one kiss!  
Once more

Closes the marble door!

I grope here in the darkness all alone!

Across the cold white stone,

Over thy tomb, a sudden starlight gleams:

Death gave me this — in dreams.



## NIOBE

### I

How like the sky she bends above her child,  
One with the great horizon of her pain!  
No sob from our low seas where woe runs wild,  
No weeping cloud, no momentary rain,  
Can mar the heaven-high visage of her grief,  
That frozen anguish, proud, majestic, dumb!  
She stoops in pity above the labouring earth,  
Knowing how fond, how brief  
Is all its hope, past, present and to come,  
She stoops in pity, and yearns to assuage  
its dearth.

### II

Through that fair face the whole dark universe  
Speaks, as a thorn-tree speaks thro' one white  
flower;

And all those wrenched Promethean souls that  
curse

The gods, but cannot die before their hour,  
Find utterance in her beauty. That fair head  
Bows over all earth's graves. It was her cry  
Men heard in Rama when the twisted ways  
With children's blood ran red!  
Her silence utters all the sea would sigh;  
And, in her face, the whole earth's anguish  
prays.

## III

It is the pity, the pity of human love  
That strains her face, upturned to meet the  
doom,  
And her deep bosom, like a snow-white dove  
Frozen upon its nest, ne'er to resume  
Its happy breathing o'er the golden brace  
Whose fostering was her death. Ay, death  
alone

Can break the anguished horror of that  
spell!

The sorrow on her face  
Is sealed; the living flesh is turned to stone:  
She knows all, all that Life and Time can  
tell.

## IV

Ah, yet, her woman's love, so vast; so tender;  
Her woman's body, hurt by every dart;  
Braving the thunder, still, still hide the slender  
Soft frightened child beneath her mighty  
heart!

She is all one mute immortal cry, one brief  
Infinite pang of such victorious pain  
That she transcends the heavens and bows  
them down!

The majesty of grief  
Is hers, and her dominion must remain  
Eternal. God nor man usurps that crown.

## THE LAST OF THE TITANS

OVER what seemed a gulf of glimmering sea,  
Huger than hugest Himalay arose  
Atlas, on weary shoulders heaving dark  
The burden of the heavens, the heavy broad  
Empurpled floors o' the roseate golden realm  
Unseen, where gods like living light in light  
Flowed and forgot the sorrows of the world.  
And his drooped head was bowed into the gloom,  
Bowed like a mountain, crushing on his breast  
A clotted beard of many pinewoods. Dark,  
Immeasurably dark his body's bulk  
Sank through the gulfs of Space; but pale as  
    death  
His face gleamed over Africa, his face,  
A mask of living marble, bending down  
Eyes like deep wells of soft compassionate gloom.

His cheeks were furrowed and writhen like  
rain-washed crags

With fierce ravines of long and age-long tears  
Whereon the pale procession of the stars  
That round him moved in mockery sometimes cast  
A dreary light of anguish; but sometimes  
The white clouds glimmering crept to comfort  
him,

And to be comforted, by shutting out  
The keen oppression of those glittering ranks  
And dread eternities. They crept like sheep  
Round some Titanic shepherd. In his breast  
They nestled; but whene'er his mighty hands  
In love would draw them closer, they escaped,  
Eluded the fond clasp,

And, ever drawing nigh him all night long,  
Wandered away for ever as they came.  
Beneath him, like a tawny panther-skin  
The great Sahara slept: beyond it lay,

Parcelled and plotted out like tiny fields,  
The prinedoms and the kingdoms of this earth,  
Mountains like frozen wrinkles on a sea,  
And seas like rain-pools in a rutted road  
Dwindling beneath his loneliness. Above  
The chariots of ten thousand thousand suns  
Conspired to make him lonelier and rolled  
Their flaming wheels remote, so that they seemed,  
E'en Alioth and Fomalhaut, no more  
Than dust of diamonds in the abysmal gloom.  
So from a huger loneliness he gazed  
Over the world where, faint as morning mists  
Drifting thro' shadowy battles on the hills,  
Drifting thro' many a pageant touched with red,  
Cities of men and nations passed away.

But once, from out a crimson-glooming dawn,  
A light appeared as of a distant star  
Flying towards him, growing as it came;

Till now it seemed a naked youth up-borne  
On silver dove-winged sandals, like a god.  
Then, then as moans the thunder through the  
    night,  
The heart of Atlas moaned — ‘Why art thou  
    come  
To look upon my sorrow? Nay, I know,  
Perseus, thou son of the everlasting gods,  
I know thee who thou art! Why comest thou  
    thus  
To mock me with the sight of that high hope  
Which Atlas never knew? Why comest thou  
    thus  
In youth and beauty through the crimson dawn?’  
And Perseus answered gently as a man  
Speaking to one in pain: ‘I did not come  
To mock thee, lord: I come to seek and pluck  
The heart from out the land without a name,  
The land without any order, where the light

Is even as darkness. I would seek and slay  
Medusa — her whose foul enchantments draw  
Man's heart into the abominable pit  
Strangled and' . . . then that other — 'Many  
    a man,  
Yea, many a hero have I seen go by  
The glory of whose face was like a god's  
Upon that quest; but I have never seen  
The face of one returning. Knowest thou not  
So terrible is the tempest of her beauty  
That if thine eyes but look upon her face  
Thy flesh and soul shall stiffen into stone.  
Her breasts are girt about with triple brass  
Against all mortal steel.' And Perseus — 'Yea,  
I know; but she — the brightest queen of  
    heaven —  
Athena, gave me mine immortal sword,  
The sword of knowledge that can shear through  
    brass



And triple steel as lightning cleaves the night.  
Athena gave me mine immortal shield,  
The shield of truth: and, mirrored in that gleam,  
The face of even Medusa hath no power  
To hurt me. I will look not on her face  
Save in the shield of truth: I shall not smite her  
Save with the sword of knowledge, bathed in  
heaven.

I pray thee show me now that bitter road,  
My death-road as thou sayest; for I will go  
And triumph and return.' And Atlas said  
'Yea; if I show thee, Perseus, wilt thou give  
One grace if thou return, one gift of grace  
To me, world-wearied: I desire to rest.  
I am weary of bearing this exceeding weight  
Of gloom eternal, weary of searching heaven  
With prayers for pity, weary of knowledge,  
weary  
Of watching little men a little hour

Beneath the pondering of prodigious heavens  
Contend like ants for little mole-hill realms  
And glow-worm glories, crowns contemptible;  
But thou can'st give me peace, if thou return.  
Nay, Perseus, I will tell thee when thou comest;  
But swear as thou dost love thy fatherland  
Thou'lt not deny me this if thou return.'  
And Perseus swore that oath with steadfast eyes,  
And Atlas pointed out the baleful road  
Across the shapeless land without a name.

White as a snow-flake on the weird black wings  
Of many a wind fulfilled with hideous dreams,  
Misshapen horrors of the ultimate gloom,  
He flew, till as they gaped with threatening jaws  
Of flame around his path he donned the helm  
Wrung from the realms of Pluto, the dark helm  
Wrought in the lands of death, which whoso  
wears

Is bodiless and invisible as the soul  
That hath gone over Lethe. Him no more  
Can death affright nor mortal doom affray.

League after league he sped till from the depths,  
Up through the darkness came a great soft sound  
Of breathing, like the breathing of the sea;  
And, shuddering, he upheld the polished shield  
And gazed on it as on some magic moon  
Wherein he saw the glimmering world below  
Mirrored; beheld what none hath ever seen  
And lived, since the beginning of the world.  
'O, horrible,' he moaned, 'O, beautiful,  
Beautiful hell'; for in the shield he saw  
Upon what seemed a plain of steaming filth  
A Titan woman, lying supine and white;  
White as a fallen column of some huge  
Temple of Ombos, hugest City of earth,  
Her body a field of lilies and her breasts

Two snowy hillocks tipt with crimson dawn;  
Her flank a marble buttress beautiful  
Couched in the foul abyss; her regal face  
Calm with the leonine languor of the Sphinx.  
On either side, close huddled to her flank  
And in the steam through which she glimmered  
pale  
A dark shape, indistinguishable bulk  
Of horror, couched with laps and folds of skin  
Like those that wrap Behemoth; and sometimes,  
Like the fierce flashing of a wrecker's fire,  
There came a glint of brazen claws and wings.  
All round them like a forest swept the deep  
Empurpled masses of her tangled hair.  
Anon with slow and sleepy crimson lips,  
Bright as with blood of heroes, her face turned  
Smiling to greet each horror with a kiss;  
And, as she turned, her beauty's palace heaved  
One rosy marble buttress from the filth

Luxuriously a little, the other sank  
And wallowed deeper. Suddenly her eyes  
Opened in childlike innocence. The dark  
Mass of her hair shook round her like a sea.  
Its purple clouds all clotted and congealed!  
And lo, the primal serpents of the slime  
Huger than Python, hissing, upward curled  
And floated round her, coil on heavy coil,  
Beautiful in their horror as they cast  
Shadows like grape-bloom o'er her breasts' white  
snow

And swayed their bloated throats: and then a  
voice

From distances beyond the abode of gods  
Cried, *This is She, the Abominable, the Queen  
Of dissolute chaos, knowing not evil or good,  
Queen of all dark adulteries, Mother of shame,  
Mother of falsehood, Mother of treachery,  
Mother of jealousy, Mother of blood and tears,*

*Queen of the ultimate darkness.* At that voice  
Young Perseus gripped the bright immortal  
sword

Which grave grey-eyed Athena gave him, gazed  
Steadfastly on the shield and floated down  
Quietly as a star-beam into hell.

Then, with one prayer to the everlasting gods,  
Across the roseate hollow of her throat  
He smote! The immortal blade like light thro'  
darkness

Flashed, and the blood rolled hissing o'er the  
filth;

And wheresoe'er it curled a serpent rose  
Hissing a-gape; then with one hideous clap  
Of thunder those two monstrous bulks arose,  
Mountainous, like two foul prodigious swine  
From out their wallowing beds i' the clinging  
mire;

And from what seemed their eyes a ruddy light

Of vengeance flashed, as of wild crimson torches  
Far-sunken in a thick and savage wood,  
Yet imminent; but Perseus, with one hand  
Clutching the tangled gloom of that dire head  
Soared upward and the silver sandals bore  
The hero and his burden far away.

And though with heavy clang of brazen wings  
The Gorgons followed, soon they dropped  
behind

And loomed no larger than two carrion flies  
Against the red horizon; and at last  
Decayed from sight. And onward Perseus came  
Triumphantly, a light upon his face  
As of a god returning, till he saw  
The mighty shoulders of the world-worn king  
Atlas, above what seemed a glimmering sea.  
And up to the grim worn face, furrowed with  
tears

He sped, according to his vow; and Atlas

Moaned like a distant thunder, 'Art thou come,  
Perseus, thou son of the everlasting gods?  
Lift up the head and let me look upon it;  
For I desire to rest.' And Perseus raised  
The cold head of Medusa, which no man  
Had seen and lived; and Atlas looked  
With weary hungering eyes upon her face.  
And lo, a sleep of stone, an iron rest  
And everlasting quiet sealed his eyes.  
His cheeks were furrowed and writhen rain-  
washed crags,  
And his drooped head was bowed into the gloom,  
A granite mountain, crushing on its breast  
A clotted beard of many pinewoods. Still  
Round him the clouds like wandering flocks of  
sheep  
Around some mighty shepherd creeping close  
Nestled against his breast; and all was peace.



## THE RIDE OF PHAËTHON

### I

FORTH, from the portals, flow the four immortal  
steeds

Tossing the splendour of their manes,  
While the dazzled Phaëthon reels o'er the flash-  
ing golden wheels  
Grasping the fourfold reins.

### II

Ah, beneath the burning hooves how the dark-  
ness cowers down

As the great steeds mount and soar;  
How the twilight springs away from the wheels  
like spray  
And the night like a battle-broken host is  
driven before.

## III

And swifter now, ah, swift, as the eight great  
shoulders lift

And leap up the rolling sky,

And the steeds in whitest glory ramp and trample  
on the night

And the quivering haunches thrust, they  
mount and fly.

## IV

Ah, the beauty of their scorn! How the blood-  
red nostrils burn,

Breathing out the dawn and the day;

How the long cloud ranks foam in fury from  
their flanks

And the heavens for their hooves make way.

## V

And higher now and higher, thro' a sea of cloudy  
fire

The chariot sways and swings,

And the heart of Phaëthon leaps, as up the  
radiant steeps

They surge, and drunk with triumph, he lifts  
his head and sings.

## VI

He sings, he sways and reels o'er the flashing  
golden wheels,

For he sees far, far below,

The little dwindling earth and the land that gave  
him birth

And the Northlands white with snow.

## VII

And he shakes the maddened reins o'er the  
gleaming seas and plains

And the chariot swings and sways,

Swifter, swifter he would fly than the Master of  
the sky,

The Lord of the sunbeams and bays.

## VIII

And each high immortal steed that had never  
known the need  
Of Apollo's lash or goad,  
Tossed the cataract of its mane o'er its quivering  
croup again  
And ramped on the sun-bright road.

## IX

*Beautiful, insolent, fierce,  
For an instant, a whirlwind of radiance,  
Tossing their manes,  
Rampant over the dazzled universe  
They struggled, while Phaëthon, Phaëthon tugged  
at the reins.*

## X

Then, like a torrent, a tempest of splendour, a  
hurricane rapture of wrath and derision  
Down they galloped, a great white thunder of  
glory, down the terrible sky;

Till earth with her rivers and seas and meadows  
broadened, and filled up the field of their  
vision

And mountains leapt from the plains to meet  
them, and all the forests and fields drew nigh.

## XI

All the bracken and grass of the mountains  
flamed and the valleys of corn were wasted,  
All the blossoming forests of Africa withered  
and shrivelled beneath their flight;  
Then, then first, those ambrosial Edens of old by  
the wheels of the Sun were blasted,  
Leaving a dread Sahara, lonely, burnt and  
blackened to greet the night.

## XII

Upward they swerved and swooped once more,  
the great white steeds, outstretched at the  
gallop,

The round earth dwindled beneath their  
flight, the mighty chariot swayed and  
swung

Under the feet of the charioteer, it swung and  
swayed as a storm-swept shallop

Tosses and leaps in the seas, and Phaëthon,  
cowering, close to the sides of it clung.

## XIII

For now to the stars, to the stars, they surged,  
and the earth was a dwindling gleam there-  
under,

Yea, now to the home of the Father of gods,  
and he rose in the wrath that none can quell,

Beholding the mortal charioteer, and the rolling  
heavens were rent with his thunder,

And Phaëthon, smitten, reeled from the  
chariot! Backward and out of it, headlong  
he fell.

## XIV

Down, down, down, down from the glittering  
heights of the firmament hurled  
Like a falling star, in a circle of fire, down the  
sheer abysm of doom,  
Down to the hiss and the heave of the seas far  
out on the ultimate verge of the world,  
That leapt with a roar to meet him, he fell,  
and they covered him o'er with their glori-  
ous gloom,  
Covered him deep with their rolling gloom,  
Their depths of pitiful gloom.

## THE EMPIRE-BUILDERS

Who are the Empire-builders? They  
Whose desperate arrogance demands  
A self-reflecting power to sway .  
A hundred little selfless lands?  
Lord God of battles, ere we bow  
To these and to their soulless lust,  
Let fall thy thunders on us now  
And strike us equal to the dust.

Before the stars in heaven were made  
Our great Commander led us forth;  
And now the embattled lines are laid  
To East, to West, to South, to North;  
According as of old He planned  
We take our station in the field,



Nor dare to dream we understand

The splendour of the swords we wield.

We know not what the Soul intends

That lives and moves behind our deeds;

We wheel and march to glorious ends

Beyond the common soldier's needs:

And some are raised to high rewards,

And some by regiments are hurled

To die upon the opposing swords

And sleep — forgotten by the world.

And not where navies churn the foam,

Nor called to fields of fierce emprise,

In many a country cottage-home.

The Empire-builder lives and dies:

Or through the roaring street he goes

A lean and weary City slave

The conqueror of a thousand foes

Who walks, unheeded, to his grave.

Leaders unknown of hopes forlorn  
Go past us in the daily mart,  
With many a shadowy crown of thorn  
And many a kingly broken heart:  
Though England's banner overhead  
Ever the secret signal flew,  
We only see its Cross is red  
As children see the skies are blue.

For all are Empire-builders here,  
Whose hearts are true to heaven and home  
And, year by slow revolving year,  
Fulfil the duties as they come;  
So simple seems the task, and yet  
Many for this are crucified;  
Ay, and their brother-men forget  
The simple wounds in palm and side.

For hearts that to their home are true  
Where'er the tides of power may flow,

Have built a kingdom great and new  
Which Time nor Fate shall overthrow;  
These are the Empire-builders, these  
Annex where none shall say them nay,  
Beyond the world's uncharted seas,  
Realms that can never pass away.

## NELSON'S YEAR — 1905

### I

'NEW Year, be good to England!'

This year, a hundred years ago,  
The world attended, breathless, on the gathering  
pomp of war,

While England and her deathless dead,  
with all their mighty hearts aglow,  
Swept onward like the dawn of doom to triumph  
at Trafalgar;

Then the world was hushed to wonder  
As the cannon's dying thunder  
Broke out again in muffled peals across the  
heaving sea,

And home the Victor came at last,  
Home, home, with England's flag half-  
mast,

That never dipped to foe before, on Nelson's  
Victory.

## II

God gave this year to England;  
And what God gives He takes again;  
God gives us life, God gives us death: our  
victories have wings.  
He gives us love and in its heart He hides  
the whole world's heart of pain!  
We gain by loss: impartially the eternal balance  
swings!  
Ay; in the fire we cherish  
Our thoughts and dreams may perish;  
Yet shall it burn for England's sake triumphant  
as of old!  
What sacrifice could gain for her  
Our own shall still maintain for her  
And hold the gates of freedom wide that take no  
keys of gold.

## III

God gave this year to England;  
Her eyes are far too bright for tears  
Of sorrow; by her silent dead she kneels, too  
proud for pride;  
Their blood, their love, have bought her  
right to claim the new imperial years  
In England's name for Freedom, in whose love  
her children died;  
In whose love, though hope may dwindle,  
Love and brotherhood shall kindle  
Between the striving nations as a choral song  
takes fire,  
Till new hope, new faith, new wonder  
Cleave the clouds of doubt asunder,  
And speed the union of mankind in one divine  
desire.

## IV

Hasten the Kingdom, England;  
This year across the listening world

There came a sound of mingled tears where  
victory and defeat

Clasped hands; and Peace — among the  
dead — stood wistfully, with white  
wings furled,

Knowing the strife was idle; for the night and  
morning meet,

Yet there is no disunion

In heaven's divine communion

As through the gates of twilight the harmonious  
morning pours;

Ah, God speed that grander morrow

When the world's divinest sorrow

Shall show how Love stands knocking at the  
world's unopened doors.

v

Hasten the Kingdom, England!

Look up across the narrow seas,

Across the great white nations to thy dark  
imperial throne

Where now three hundred million souls  
attend on thine august decrees

Ah, bow thine head in humbleness, the Kingdom  
is thine own:

Not for the pride or power

God gave thee this in dower;

But, now the West and East have met and wept  
their mortal loss,

Now that their tears have spoken

And the long dumb spell is broken,

Is it nothing that thy banner bears the red  
eternal cross?

## VI

Ay! Lift the flag of England;

And lo, that Eastern cross is there,

Veiled with a hundred meanings as our English  
eyes are veiled;



Yet to the grander dawn we move obli-  
vious of the sign we bear,  
Oblivious of the heights we climb until the last  
is scaled ;  
Then with all the earth before us  
And the great cross floating o'er us  
We shall break the sword we forged of old, so  
weak we were and blind ;  
While the inviolate heaven discloses  
England's Rose of all the roses  
Dawning wide and ever wider o'er the kingdom  
of mankind.

## VII

Hasten the Kingdom, England ;  
For then all nations shall be one ;  
One as the ordered stars are one that sing upon  
their way,  
One with the rhythmic glories of the swing-  
ing sea and the rolling sun,

One with the flow of life and death, the tides of  
    night and day;  
    One with all dreams of beauty,  
    One with all laws of duty;  
One with the weak and helpless while the one  
    sky burns above;  
    Till eyes by tears made glorious  
    Look up at last victorious  
And lips that starved break open in one song of  
    life and love.

## VIII

‘New Year, be good to England;’  
    And when the Spring returns again  
Rekindle in our English hearts the universal  
    Spring,  
    That we may wait in faith upon the former  
    and the latter rain,  
Till all waste places burgeon and the wildernesses  
    sing;

Pour the glory of thy pity  
Through the dark and troubled city;  
Pour the splendour of thy beauty over wood and  
meadow fair;  
May the God of battles guide thee  
And the Christ-child walk beside thee  
With a word of peace for England in the dawn  
of Nelson's Year.

## IN TIME OF WAR

### I

TO-NIGHT o'er Bagshot heath the purple heather  
Rolls like dumb thunder to the splendid West;  
And mighty ragged clouds are massed together  
Above the scarred old common's broken  
breast;

And there are hints of blood between the  
boulders,  
Red glints of fiercer blossom, bright and bold;  
And round the shaggy mounds and sullen shoulders  
The gorse repays the sun with savage gold.

And now, as in the West the light grows holy,  
And all the hollows of the heath grow dim,

Far off, a sulky rumble rolls up slowly

Where guns at practice growl their evening  
hymn.

And here and there in bare clean yellow spaces

The print of horse-hoofs like an answering cry  
Strikes strangely on the sense from lonely places  
Where there is nought but empty heath and  
sky.

The print of warlike hoofs, where now no figure

Of horse or man along the sky's red rim

Breaks on the low horizon's rough black rigour

To make the gorgeous waste less wild and  
grim;

Strangely the hoof-prints strike, a Crusoe's  
wonder,

Framed with sharp furze amongst the footless  
fells

A menace and a mystery, rapt asunder,  
As if the whole wide world contained nought  
else, —

Nought but the grand despair of desolation  
Between us and that wild, how far, how near,  
Where, clothed with thunder, nation grapples  
nation,  
And Slaughter grips the clay-cold hand of  
Fear.

## II

And far above the purple heath the sunset stars  
awaken,  
And ghostly hosts of cloud across the West  
begin to stream,  
And all the low soft winds with muffled cannon-  
ades are shaken,  
And all the blood-red blossom draws aloof  
into a dream:

A dream — no more — and round the dream the  
clouds are curled together;

A dream of two great stormy hosts embat-  
tled in the sky;

For there against the low red heavens each  
purple clump of heather

Becomes a serried host of spears around a  
battle-cry;

Becomes the distant battle-field or brings the  
dream so near it

That, almost, as the purple smoke around  
them reels and swims,

A thousand grey-lipped faces flash — ah, hark,  
the heart can hear it —

The sharp command, the clash of steel, the  
sudden sough of limbs.

And through the purple thunders there are silent  
shadows creeping

With murderous gleams of light, and then —  
    a mighty leaping roar  
Where foe and foe are met; and then — a long  
    low sound of weeping  
As Death laughs out from sea to sea, another  
    fight is o'er.

Another fight — but ah, how much is over?  
    Night descending  
    Draws o'er the scene her ghastly moon-shot  
    veil with piteous hands;  
But all around the bivouac-glare the shadowy  
    pickets wending  
See sights, hear sounds that only war's own  
    madness understands.

No circle of the accursed dead where dreaming  
    Dante wandered,  
No city of death's eternal dole could match  
    this mortal world



Where men, before the living soul and quivering  
flesh are sundered,  
Through all the bestial shapes of pain to one  
wide grave are hurled.

But in the midst for those who dare beyond the  
fringe to enter  
Be sure one kingly figure lies with pale and  
blood-soiled face,  
And round his brows a ragged crown of thorns;  
and in the centre  
Of those pale folded hands and feet the sigil  
of his grace.

See, how the pale limbs, marred and scarred in  
love's lost battle, languish;  
See how the splendid passion still smiles  
quietly from his eyes;  
Come, come and see a king indeed, who triumphs  
in his anguish,

Who conquers here in utter loss beneath the  
eternal skies.

For unto lips so deadly calm what answer shall  
be given?

Oh pale, pale king so deadly still beneath the  
unshaken stars,

Who shall deny thy kingdom here, though  
heaven and earth were riven

With the last roar of onset in the world's  
intestine wars?

All round him reeks the obscene red hell — the  
scream of haggled horses,

The curse, the moan, the tossing arms, the  
hideous twisted forms,

Where, as the surgeons call up life's last pitiful  
resources,

The darkness heaves around them like a mass  
of mangled worms.

'Life, doctor, life!' 'Be wise; you'd better  
die: 'twill soon be over,' —

The blackened trunk drops guttering back, the  
mouth is dumb again:

'What use were life to you, my lad? she wouldn't  
know her lover,  
And cruelty here is pity's best — to put you  
out of pain.'

And far away in lonely homes the lamp of hope  
is burning,

All night the white-faced women wait with  
aching eyes of prayer,

All night the little children dream of father's  
glad returning;

All night he lies beneath the stars and —  
dreams no more out there.

Only the senseless clay-cold hand may clasp  
some crumpled letter, —

A lantern — see — the big round scrawl, the  
child's long-studied phrase

'When Dadda comes again . . . his girl will try  
so much much better :

She'll be much taller, too; and much more  
grown up in her ways.'

The laugh is Death's; he laughs as erst o'er  
hours that England cherished,

'Count up, count up the stricken homes that  
wail the first-born son,

Count by your starved and fatherless the tale  
of what hath perished;

Then gather with your foes and ask if you —  
or I — have won.'

### III

O'er Bagshot heath it rolls, the old old story, —  
The great moon dawns; the sunset dies  
away;

Year strengthens year as glory kindles glory  
From its own sad procession of decay.

When shall the sun-dawn of the perfect nation,  
Rise pure and white above the blood-red sea;  
When shall war die and by death's new creation  
Begin the long-sought world-wide harmony?

Nearer, still nearer creeps the light we hope for,  
Yet still eludes our war-worn aching eyes:  
Nearer, still nearer, steals the truth we grope for,  
Yet, as we think to grasp it, fades and flies.

The world rolls on; and love and peace are mated:  
Still on the breast of England, like a star,  
The blood-red lonely heath blows, consecrated,  
A brooding practice-ground for blood-red war.

Yet is there nothing out of tune with Nature  
There, where the skylark showers his earliest  
song,

Where sun and wind have moulded every feature,  
And one world-music bears each note along.

There many a brown-winged kestrel swoops or  
hovers

In poised and patient quest of his own prey ;  
And there are fern-clad glens where happy lovers  
May kiss the murmuring summer noon away.

There, as the primal earth was — all is glorious

Perfect and wise and wonderful in view  
Of that great heaven through which we rise  
victorious

O'er all that strife and change and death can  
do.

No nation yet has risen o'er earth's first nature ;

Though love illumed each individual mind,  
Still, like some dark half-formed primeval  
creature

The fierce mob crawled a thousand years be-  
hind.

Still on the standards of the great World-Powers

Lion and bear and eagle sullenly brood,

Whether the slow folds flap o'er halcyon hours

Or stream tempestuously o'er fields of blood.

By war's red evolution we have risen

Far, since fierce Erda chose her conquering

few,

And out of Death's red gates and Time's grey

prison

They burst, elect from battle, tried and true,

Tempered like sword-blades; but life's vast

procession

Has passed beyond the help of war's wild day,

The day where now a world in retrogression

Goes hurrying down the broad and hopeless

way.

For now Death mocks at youth and love and

glory,

Chivalry slinks behind his loaded mines,  
With meaner murderous lips War tells her story,  
And round her cunning brows no laurel shines.

And here to us the eternal charge is given  
To rise and make our low world touch God's  
high:  
To hasten God's own kingdom, Man's own  
heaven,  
And teach Love's grander army how to die.

No kingdom then, no long-continuing city  
Shall e'er again be stablished by the sword;  
No blood-bought throne defy the powers of pity,  
No despot's crown outweigh one helot's word.

Imperial England, breathe thy marching orders:  
The great host waits; the end, the end is close,  
When earth shall know thy peace in all her  
borders,  
And all her deserts blossom with thy Rose.



Princedom and peoples rise and flash and perish  
As the dew passes from the flowering thorn;  
Yet the one Kingdom that our dreams still  
cherish  
Lives in a light that blinds the world's red  
morn.

Hasten the Kingdom, England, the days darken;  
We would not have thee slacken watch or  
ward,  
Nor doff thine armour till the whole world  
hearken,  
Nor till Time bid thee lay aside the sword.

Hasten the Kingdom; hamlet, heath, and city,  
We are all at war, one bleeding bulk of pain;  
Little we know; but one thing — by God's pity —  
We know, and know all else on earth is vain.

We know not yet how much we dare, how little;  
We dare not dream of peace; yet, as at need,

England, God help thee, let no jot or tittle  
Of Love's last law go past thee without heed.

*Who saves his life shall lose it!* The great ages  
Bear witness — Rome and Babylon and Tyre  
Cry from the dust-stopped lips of all their sages,  
There is no hope if man can climb no higher.

England, by God's grace set apart to ponder  
A little while from battle, ah, take heed,  
Keep watch, keep watch, beside thy sleeping  
thunder;  
Call down Christ's pity while those others  
bleed;

Waken the God within thee, while the sorrow  
Of battle surges round a distant shore,  
While Time is thine, lest on some deadly mor-  
row  
The moving finger write — *but thine no more.*

Little we know — but though the advancing  
æons

Win every painful step by blood and fire,  
Though tortured mouths must chant the world's  
great pæans,  
And martyred souls proclaim the world's de-  
sire;

Though war be nature's engine of rejection,  
Soon, soon, across her universal verge  
The great surviving host of Time's election  
Shall into God's diviner light emerge.

Hasten the Kingdom, England, queen and  
mother;

Little we know of all Time's works and ways;  
Yet this, this, this is sure: we need none  
other

Knowledge or wisdom, hope or aim or praise,

But to keep this one stormy banner flying

In this one faith that none shall e'er dis-  
prove,

Then drive the embattled world before thee,  
crying,

There is one Emperor, whose name is Love.

## TO ENGLAND IN 1907

(A PRAYER THAT SHE MIGHT SPEAK FOR PEACE)

### I

Now is thy foot set on the splendid way!  
Hold this hour fast, though yet the skies be grey:  
Lift up thy voice to greet the perfect day,  
Speak, England, speak across the trembling  
sea.

### II

E'en now the grandest dawn that ever rose  
Is flooding heaven with glory: the light grows  
White as a star where thy keen helmet glows  
Fronting the morn that sets all nations free.

### III

Speak, from thine island throne! Here, in thy  
Gate,  
Now, for thy voice alone, the nations wait:

Speak, with the heart that made and keeps thee  
great,

Speak the great word of peace from sea to sea.

## IV

The nations wait, scarce knowing what they  
need:

Cold cunning claims their ears for lust and greed !

The poor and weak, with struggling hands that  
bleed

Pray to thee now that thou wilt set them free.

## V

Thou that hast dared so many a thunder-blast

Is all thy vaunted empery so soon past ?

First of the first, art thou afraid at last

To hold thy hands out first across the sea ?

## VI

Not for such fears God gave thee thy rich dower,

The sea-wrought sceptre and the imperial power !

Ages have poured their blood for this one hour  
That thou might'st speak and set the whole  
world free.

## VII

The poor and weak uplift their manacled hands  
To thee, our Mother, our Lady and Queen of  
lands:

Anguished in prayer before thy footstool stands  
Peace, with her white wings glimmering o'er  
the sea.

## VIII

Others may shrink whose naked frontiers face  
A million foemen of an alien race;  
But thou, Imperial, by thy pride of place,  
O, canst thou falter or fear to set them free?

## IX

Thou, thou alone canst speak; thou, thou alone,  
From the sure citadel of thy rock-bound throne:

Trust thy strong heart; thine island is thine own,  
Girt with the thunder and lightning of the sea.

## X

Fools prate of pride where butchered legions fall;  
Peace has one battle sterner than them all,  
(England, on thee our ringing trumpets call !)  
One battle that shall set the whole world free.

## XI

Speak, speak and act! The sceptre is in thine  
hand;  
Proclaim the reign of love from land to land;  
Then, come the world against thee, thou shalt  
stand!  
Speak, with the world-wide voice of thine own  
sea.



## IN CLOAK OF GREY

### I

LOVE'S a pilgrim, cloaked in grey,  
And his feet are pierced and bleeding;  
Have ye seen him pass this way  
Sorrowfully pleading?  
Ye that weep the world away  
Have ye seen King Love to-day?

### II

Yea, we saw him; but he came  
Poppy-crowned and white of limb,  
Song had touched his lips to flame,  
And his eyes were drowsed and dim;  
And we kissed the hours away  
Till night grew rosier than the day.

## III

Hath he left you? — Yea, he left us

A little while ago;

Of his laughter quite bereft us

And his limbs of snow:

We know not why he went away,

Who ruled our revels yesterday!—

## IV

Because ye did not understand

Love cometh from afar,

A pilgrim out of Holy Land,

Guided by a star;

Last night he came in cloak of grey

Begging! Ye knew him not! He went his way.

## A RIDE FOR THE QUEEN

QUEEN of queens, oh lady mine,

You who say you love me,

Here's a cup of crimson wine

To the stars above me;

Here's a cup of blood and gall

For a soldier's quaffing!

What's the prize to crown it all?

Death? I'll take it laughing!

I ride for the Queen to-night!

Though I find no knightly fee

Waiting on my lealty,

High upon the gallows-tree

Faithful to my fealty,

What had I but love and youth,

Hope and fame in season?

She has proved that more than truth  
Glorifies her treason!

Would that other do as much?

Ah, but if in sorrow

Some forgotten look or touch

Pierce her heart to-morrow,

She might love me yet, I think;

So her lie befriends me,

Though I know there's darker drink

Down the road she sends me.

Ay, one more great chance is mine!

(Can I faint or falter?)

She shall pour my blood like wine,

Make my heart her altar,

Burn it to the dust! For, there,

What if o'er the embers

She should stoop and — I should hear —

'Hush! Thy love remembers!'

One more chance for every word  
Whispered to betray me,  
While she buckled on my sword,  
Smiling to allay me;  
One more chance; ah, let me not  
Mar her perfect pleasure;  
Love shall pay me, jot by jot,  
Measure for her measure.

Faith shall think I never knew,  
I will be so fervent!  
Doubt shall dream I dreamed her true,  
As her war-worn servant!  
Whoso flouts her spotless name  
(Love, I wear thy token!)  
He shall face one sword of flame  
Ere the lie be spoken!

God, the world is white with May,  
(Fragrant as her bosom!)

Could I find a sweeter way  
Through the year's young blossom,  
Where her warm red mouth on mine  
Woke my soul's desire?  
Hey! The cup of crimson wine,  
Blood and gall and fire!

Castle Doom or Gates of Death?  
(Smile again for pity!)  
'Boot and horse,' my lady saith,  
'Spur against the City,  
Bear this message!' God and she  
Still forget the guerdon;  
Nay, the rope is on the tree!  
That shall bear the burden!  
I ride for the Queen to-night!

## SONG

### I

WHEN that I loved a maiden  
My heaven was in her eyes,  
And when they bent above me  
I knew no deeper skies;  
But when her heart forsook me,  
My spirit broke its bars,  
For grief beyond the sunset  
And love beyond the stars.

### II

When that I loved a maiden,  
She seemed the world to me:  
Now is my soul the universe,  
My dreams — the sky and sea!

There bends no heaven above me,  
No glory binds or bars  
My grief beyond the sunset,  
My love beyond the stars.

## III

When that I loved a maiden,  
I worshipped where she trod;  
But, when she clove my heart, the cleft  
Set free the imprisoned god;  
Then was I King of all the world!  
My soul had burst its bars  
For grief beyond the sunset  
And love beyond the stars.



## EVE'S APPLE

### I

WHEN you leant thro' the leaves with your slow  
red smile and your ivory body bare,  
Ah, what was the fruit you gathered that day,  
white Eve with the dusky hair?  
For we took it and ate it together and laughed!  
Your white teeth bit to the core.  
There was little to leave for the doves to peck,  
when our delicate feast was o'er.

### II

The ripe fruit breathed of kisses, you said, as  
your breasts' white apples may;  
But your body was cold from the coils of the  
snake when you came to my arms that day:

There was blood, red blood on our lips, white  
    Eve, as we nibbled away in the sun;  
But I knew that the fruit was my heart, white  
    Eve,  
The red rent core of my heart, white Eve,  
Which we gnawed and left for the rats, white  
    Eve, when our delicate feast was done.

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A SONG

### I

*'Come to me in my dreams!'* — how oft  
With eyes how kind and voice how soft,  
I heard thee sing, at fall of day,  
The scholar poet's tenderest lay.

\* \* \* \* \*

### II

But oh, come not to me; for then  
The dear dead love will stir again;  
And when the cold light bids me wake  
With each new day my heart will break.

### III

Come not in dreams; how could I bear  
Once more to feel thy love so near,  
And dream it true, yet inly know  
What bitter treachery lurked below?

## IV

Come not, as thou *wilt* come, despite  
All prayers, in watches of the night,  
With eyes made bright by foolish tears  
And fleeting gleams of happier years.

## V

Come not, as thou hast come of old,  
To flood a sunless world with gold,  
Or, with the mockery of a smile,  
Cheat me to dream thee kind awhile.

## VI

Come not, as thou so oft didst come,  
When sorrow made me blind and dumb,  
To lay false lips on mine and say  
'Sweet love can never pass away.'

## VII

*Come not in dreams to me; for then  
The dear dead love will stir again;  
And, when the cold light bids me wake,  
With each new day my heart will break.*

## E TENEBRIS

### I

INTO the keeping of death  
I commend my love,  
Into the gloom of the grave  
And the lasting sleep!  
Yet there is hope, one saith,  
In some glory above,  
For the broken, the broken wave  
That is lost in the deep.

### II

O, I know not their meaning at all,  
They speak idly to me,  
Who say that the lost things return  
As day followeth night!

I watch the leaves fall  
And waves break on the sea,  
And the strange skies that burn  
With the stranger day's light.

## III

Shall I care if another day greet me  
In crimson and gold,  
Though the skies be still blue  
When the eyes that were kind  
Flash no longer to meet me  
As of old, as of old,  
With a love that was true,  
Or a dream that was blind?

## IV

I have no hope, no faith,  
No desire any more,  
That the last year's flower  
Should return to the spray:

'Spring cometh, spring cometh,' one saith;

But who shall restore

Just the one perished hour

Of that one perished May?

## SONNET

LOVE, when the great hour knelled for thee and  
me,

The great hour that should prove thee false  
or true,

When life surged round us like a wintry sea

And thy heart feared to say what both hearts  
knew;

When all thy vows and honeyed words were  
proven

False to the core of thy poor treacherous heart;

When by God's fire my heart's false heaven was  
cloven

And, white and dumb, our torn souls turned  
to part;

O, never think — for all the flash and thunder  
That showed us the dead body at our feet,



Though heaven and hell conspired our souls to  
sunder

And though we twain in hell nor heaven shall  
meet,

Think not, where'er Love's clay-wrought idols  
lie,

The Love to which I prayed through these can  
die.

## THE REAL DANTE

### I

O LOVE, Love, Love, Death robbed me unaware,  
Undreaming that we ne'er should meet again,  
Else had one soul's infinity of pain  
Moated thee round with waves for Hell to dare.  
Yea, in that fight, even now, might I but share,  
Poor craven I, who yet on earth remain,  
Heaven, heaven itself should menace us in vain,  
Thy heart on mine, my lips upon thine hair.

I have lost courage, Love, in losing thee,  
Courage to bear this wonder of the sky,  
Courage to front that dark Eternity,  
Courage to brook life's pitiful riddle — *Why,*  
*Why hath God hurt us thus?* Poor broken cry  
Quivering, unanswered, o'er the world's wide  
sea!

## II

And thou art sleeping on that silent shore!  
And thou can'st never, never, once return!  
Not though the starved heart strain to thee  
and yearn,  
And the lame hands reach upward and implore,  
And the wrenched lips reiterate, o'er and o'er,  
One thought wherewith the pitiless planets  
burn,  
One lesson life is all too short to learn,  
One simple sob of the soul — *No more, no more!*

My life shall never learn it! Come thou back,  
O, give the lie to all this dust hath said!  
Come, let the stars retrace their shining track,  
Steal from that solemn midnight of the dead!  
Though as a dream thou canst but pass me by,  
Come, give my heart the strength to break and  
die.

## A PRAYER

ONLY a little, O Father, only to rest  
Or ever the night come and the Eternal sleep,  
Only to rest for a little, a little to weep  
In the dead love's pitiful arms, on the dead  
love's breast,

A little to loosen the frozen fountains, to free  
Rivers of blood and tears that should slacken  
the pulse  
Of this pitiless heart and appease these pangs  
that convulse

Body and soul! O, out of Eternity,

A moment to whisper, only a moment to tell  
My dead, my dead, what words are so helpless  
to say —

The dreams unuttered, the prayers no passion  
could pray —  
And then, the eternal sleep or the pains of hell,  
  
I could welcome them, Father, O gladly as ever  
a child  
Laying his head on the pillow might turn to  
his rest  
And remember in dreams, as the hand of the  
mother is prest  
On his hair, how the Pitiful blessed him of old  
and smiled.

## OLD JAPAN AT EARL'S COURT

### I

OF old Japan — how far away! —  
We dreamed — how long ago! —  
We saw by twisted creek and bay  
The blue plum-blossoms blow,  
And dragons coiling down below  
Like dragons on a fan,  
And pig-tailed sailors lurching slow  
Thro' streets of old Japan.

### II

Who knows that land — that dim blue day  
Where white tea-roses grow?  
Only a penny all the way  
They cry in Pimlico:

The busses rumble to and fro,  
Ah, catch one if you can,  
And see the paper-lanterns glow  
Thro' streets of old Japan.

III

What need we more than youth and May  
To make our Miyako?  
A chuckle from the cherry spray  
A cherub's mocking crow,  
A sudden twang, a sweet swift throe  
As Daisy trips by Dan,  
And careless Cupid drops his bow  
And laughs — from old Japan.

IV

*And there the cherry bough shall sway  
The peach-bloom shed its snow,  
With scents and petals strewn astray  
Till night be sweet enow:*

*Then lovers wander, whispering low*

*As lovers only can*

*Where rosy paper lanterns glow*

*Through streets of old Japan.*



## OXFORD REVISITED

TIMID and strange, like a ghost, I pass the familiar portals,

Echoing now like a tomb, they accept me no more as of old;

Yet I go wistfully onward, a shade thro' a kingdom of mortals

Wanting a face to greet me, a hand to grasp and to hold.

Hardly I know as I go if the beautiful City is only Mocking me under the moon, with its streams and its willows agleam,

Whether the City of friends or I that am friendless and lonely,

Whether the boys that go by or the time-worn towers be the dream;

Whether the walls that I know, or the unknown  
fugitive faces,  
Faces like those that I loved, faces that haunt  
and waylay,  
Faces so like and unlike, in the dim unforgettable  
places,  
Startling the heart into sickness that aches  
with the sweet of the May, —

Whether all these or the world with its wars be  
the wandering shadows !  
Ah, sweet over green-gloomed waters the may  
hangs, crimson and white;  
And quiet canoes creep down by the warm gold  
dusk of the meadows  
Lapping with little splashes and ripples of  
silvery light.

Others like me have returned: I shall see the old  
faces to-morrow,

Down by the gay-coloured barges, alert for  
the throb of the oars,  
Wanting to row once again, or tenderly jesting  
with sorrow  
Up the old stairways and noting the strange  
new names on the doors.

Is it a dream? And I know not nor care if there  
be an awaking  
Ever at all any more, for the years that have  
torn us apart,  
Few, so few as they are, will ever be rending and  
breaking:  
Sooner by far than I knew have they wrought  
this change for my heart!

Well; I grow used to it now! Could the dream  
but remain and for ever,  
With the flowers round the grey quadrangle  
laughing as time grows old!

For the waters go down to the sea, but the sky  
still gleams on the river !

We plucked them — but there shall be lilies,  
ivory lilies and gold.

And still, in the beautiful City, the river of life is  
no duller,

Only a little strange as the eighth hour dreamily  
chimes,

In the City of friends and echoes, ribbons and  
music and colour,

Lilac and blossoming chestnut, willows and  
whispering limes.

Over the Radcliffe Dome the moon as the ghost  
of a flower

Weary and white awakes in the phantom fields  
of the sky :

The trustful shepherded clouds are asleep over  
steeple and tower,

Dark under Magdalen walls the Cher like a  
dream goes by.

Back, we come wandering back, poor ghosts, to  
the home that one misses

Out in the shelterless world, the world that  
was heaven to us then,

Back from the coil and the vastness, the stars  
and the boundless abysses,

Like monks from a pilgrimage stealing in bliss  
to their cloisters again.

City of dreams that we lost, accept now the gift  
we inherit —

Love, such a love as we knew not of old in the  
blaze of our noon,

We that have found thee at last, half City, half  
heavenly Spirit,

While over a mist of spires the sunset mellows  
the moon.

## EARTH'S IMMORTALITIES

### I

No more, proud singers, boast no more!  
Your high immortal throne  
Will scarce outlast a king's!  
Time is a sea that hath no shore  
Wherein Death idly flings  
Your fame like some small pebble-stone  
That sinks to rise no more.

*Then boast no more, proud singers,  
Your high immortal throne!*

### II

This earth, this little grain of dust,  
Drifting among the stars,  
With her invisible wars,  
Her love, her hate, her lust,

This microscopic ball  
Whereof you scan a part so small  
Outlasts but little even your own poor dust.

*Then boast no more, proud singers,  
Your high immortal throne!*

## III

That golden spark of light must die,  
Which now you call your sun,  
Soon will its race be run  
Around its trivial sky:  
What hand shall then unroll  
Dead Maro's little golden scroll  
When earth and sun in one wide charnel lie?

*Boast no more, proud singers!  
Your high immortal throne  
Will scarce outlast a king's.*

## THE TESTIMONY OF ART

As earth, sad earth, thrusts many a gloomy cape  
    Into the sea's bright colour and living glee,  
    So do we strive to embay that mystery  
Which earthly hands must ever let escape;  
The Word we seek for is the golden shape  
    That shall express the Soul we cannot see,  
    A temporal chalice of Eternity  
Purple with beating blood of the hallowed grape.

Once was it wine and sacramental bread  
    Whereby we knew the power that through  
    Him smiled  
    When, in one still small utterance, He hurled  
The Eternities beneath his feet and said  
    With lips, O meek as any little child,  
    *Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.*



## SONG

### I

NYMPHS and naiads, come away,  
    Love lies dead !  
Cover the cast-back golden head,  
Cover the lovely limbs with may,  
    And with fairest boughs of green  
And many a rose-wreathed brier spray ;  
    But let no hateful yew be seen  
    Where Love lies dead.

### II

Let not the quean that would not hear  
    (Love lies dead !)  
Or beauty that refused to save  
    Exult in one dejected tear ;

But gather the glory of the year,  
The pomp and glory of the year,  
The triumphing glory of the year,  
    And softly, softly, softly shed  
Its light and fragrance round the grave  
    Where Love lies dead.

## REMEMBRANCE

O UNFORGOTTEN lips, grey haunting eyes,  
Soft curving cheeks and heart-remembered  
brow,

It is all true, the old love never dies,  
And — parted — we must meet for ever now.

We did not think it true! We did not think  
Love meant this universal cry of pain,  
This crown of thorn, this vinegar to drink,  
This lonely crucifixion o'er again.

Yet, through the darkness of the sleepless night,  
Your tortured face comes meekly answering  
mine;  
Dumb, but I know why those mute lips are  
white,

Dark, but I know why those dark lashes  
shine.

O Love, Love, Love, and what if this should  
be

For ever now, through God's Eternity?

## UNITY

### I

HEART of my heart, the world is young;

Love lies hidden in every rose!

Every song that the skylark sung

Once, we thought, must come to a close:

Now we know the spirit of song,

Song that is merged in the chant of the whole,

Hand in hand as we wander along,

What should we doubt of the years that roll?

### II

Heart of my heart, we cannot die!

Love triumphant in flower and tree,

Every life that laughs at the sky

Tells us nothing can cease to be:

One, we are one with a song to-day,  
    One with the clover that scents the wold,  
One with the Unknown, far away,  
    One with the stars, when earth grows old.

## III

Heart of my heart, we are one with the wind,  
    One with the clouds that are whirled o'er the  
    lea,  
One in many, O broken and blind,  
    One as the waves are at one with the sea!  
Ay! when life seems scattered apart,  
    Darkens, ends as a tale that is told,  
One, we are one, O heart of my heart,  
    One still one, while the world grows old.

---

## JOY AND PAIN

BELOVÉD, I could not tame thy wild bright  
wings!

Thy flight was like a seabird's down the skies:  
I could but catch the brightness of thine  
eyes;

And then — the wind that buffets, the spray  
that stings

And lashes and blinds a shore that only rings  
With the elemental storms bore down my  
cries,

And where the clotted foam in fury flies  
Thou hadst flown rejoicing in all cruel things.

I know thee now, Belovéd, for thou art come  
With blood-stained breast into my fostering  
hand!

O weary wings that have come home again,  
O beating heart where every song lies dumb,  
O wounded bird, at last I understand,  
I understand those wild bright eyes of pain.



## IN THE COOL OF THE EVENING

### I

IN the cool of the evening, when the low sweet  
whispers waken,  
When the labourers turn them homeward,  
and the weary have their will,  
When the censers of the roses o'er the forest-  
aisles are shaken  
Is it but the wind that cometh o'er the far  
green hill?

### II

For they say 'tis but the sunset winds that  
wander thro' the heather,  
Rustle all the meadow-grass and bend the  
dewy fern:

They say 'tis but the winds that bow the reeds  
    in prayer together,  
And fill the shaken pools with fire along the  
    shadowy burn.

III

In the beauty of the twilight, in the Garden  
    that He loveth,  
They have veiled his lovely vesture with the  
    darkness of a name!  
Thro' His Garden, thro' His Garden, it is but the  
    wind that moveth,  
No more! But O the miracle, the miracle is  
    the same.

IV

In the cool of the evening, when the sky is an  
    old story,  
Slowly dying, but remembered, ay, and loved  
    with passion still . . .

Hush! . . . the fringes of His garment, in the  
fading golden glory  
Softly rustling as He cometh o'er the far  
green hill.

## THE COTTAGE OF THE KINDLY LIGHT

THERE is a valley of fir-woods in the West  
That slopes between great mountains to the sea.  
Once, at the valley's mouth, a cottage stood:  
Its ruins remain, like boulders of a rock,  
High on the hill, whose base is white with foam.  
To its forsaken garden sometimes come  
Lovers, who lean upon its grass-grown gate  
And listen to the sea-song far below;  
Or little children, with their baskets, trip  
Merrily through the fir-woods and the fern,  
And climb the crumbling thistle-empurpled wall  
Around the tangled copse, and laugh to find  
The hardy straggling raspberries all their own.  
  
Round it the curlews wheel and cry all night;  
And, with no other comfort than the stars

Can faintly shed from their familiar heights  
It has been patient, while the world below  
Has hidden itself in darkness and in clouds  
Of terror from the landward-rushing storm.  
Like a small gleam of quartz in a great rock,  
A tiny beacon in the whirling gloom,  
It stood and gathered sorrow from the world.

There, many years ago, a woman dwelt,  
A sailor's widow with her only son;  
And ever as she hugged him to her heart  
In those glad days when he was but a child,  
Her memories of one black eternal night  
When she had watched and waited for the sail  
That nevermore returned, filled her with one  
Supreme, almost unbreathable, desire  
That this her little one, her living bliss,  
The last caress incarnate of her love,  
Should never leave her side; or, if he left,

Never set forth upon the sea: her flesh  
Shuddered as the sea shuddered in the sun  
Over the cold grave of her first last love  
Even to dream of it; yet she remained  
Silent and passive on her sea-washed hill,  
Facing the sunset, in that lonely home,  
Where everything bore witness to the sea, —  
The shells her love had brought from foreign  
    lands,  
The model ship he built; yet she remained.  
For her first kisses lingered in the scent  
Of those rough wallflowers round the white-  
    washed walls,  
And the first flush of love that touched her cheek  
Lingered and lived and died and lived again  
In the pink thrift that nodded by the gate.  
As if these and her outlook o'er the sea  
Were nought else but her soul's one atmosphere,  
Wherein alone she lived and moved and breathed,

Having no other thought but *This is home,*  
*My part in God's eternity,* she still  
Remained. The lad grew; yet her fear was dumb.

The lad grew, and the white foam kissed his feet  
Sporting upon the verge: the green waves  
laughed

And smote their hard bright kisses on his lips  
As he swam out to meet them: the whole sea,  
Like some strange symbol of the spiritual deeps  
That hourly lure the soul of man in quest  
Of beauty, pleasure, knowledge, summoned him  
out,

Out from the old faiths, the old fostering arms  
of home,

Called him with strange new voices evermore,  
Called him with ringing names of high renown,  
With white-armed sirens in its blossoming waves,  
And heavenly cities in its westering suns;

Called him; and old adventures filled his heart,  
And he forgot, as all of us forget,  
The imperishable and infinite desire  
Of the vacant arms and bosom that still yearn  
For the little vanished children, still, still ache  
To keep their children little! He grew wroth  
At aught that savoured of such fostering care  
As mothers long to lavish, aught that seemed  
To rob him of his manhood, his free-will:  
And she — she understood and she was dumb.

And so the lad grew up; and he was tall,  
Supple, and sunburnt, and a flower of men.  
His eyes had caught the blue of sea-washed skies,  
And deepened with strange manhood, till, at last,  
One eve in May his mother wandered down  
The hill to await his coming, wistfully  
Wandered, touching with vague and dreaming  
hands



The uncrumpling fronds of fern and budding  
roses

As if she thought them but the ghosts of spring.  
From far below the golden breezes brought  
A mellow music from the village church,  
Which o'er the fragrant fir-wood she could see  
Pointing a sky-blue spire to heaven: she knew  
That music, her most heart-remembered song —

*“Sun of my soul, thou Saviour dear,  
It is not night if Thou be near!”*

And as the music made her one with all  
That soft transfigured world of eventide,  
One with the flame that sanctified the West,  
One with the golden sabbath of the sea,  
One with the sweet responses of the woods,  
One with the kneeling mountains, there she saw  
In a tangle of ferns and roses and wild light  
Shot from the sunset through a glade of fir,

Her boy and some young rival in his arms,  
A girl of seventeen summers, dusky-haired,  
Grey-eyed, and breasted like a crescent moon,  
Lifting her red lips in a dream of love  
Up to the red lips of her only son.  
Jealousy numbed the mother's lonely soul,  
And, sickening at the heart, she stole away.

Yet she said nothing when her boy returned;  
And, after supper, she took down the Book,  
Her own dead grandsire's massive wedding-gift,  
The large-print Bible, like a corner-stone  
Hewn from the solemn fabric of his life —  
An heirloom for the guidance of his sons  
And their sons' sons; and every night her boy  
Read it aloud to her — a last, fond link  
Frayed and nigh snapt already, for she knew  
It irked him. And he read, *Abide with us,*  
*For the day is far spent;* and she looked at him

Shyly, furtively. With great tears she gazed  
As on a stranger in her child's new face.

At last he told her all — told of his love,  
And how he must grow wealthy now and make  
A home for his young sweetheart, how he meant  
To work upon a neighbour's fishing-boat  
Till he could buy one for himself. He ceased;  
Far off the sea sighed and a curlew wailed;  
A soft breeze brought a puff of wallflower scent  
Warm through the casement. He looked up and  
smiled

Into his mother's face, and saw the tears  
Creep through the gnarled old hands that hid  
her eyes.

He saw the star-light glisten on her tears!  
He could not understand: her lips were dumb.

Oh, dumb and patient as our Mother Earth  
Watching from age to age the silent, swift,

Light-hearted progress of her careless sons  
By new-old ways to one unaltering doom,  
Through the long nights she waited as of old  
Till in the dawn — and coloured like the dawn —  
The tawny sails came home across the bar.  
And every night she placed a little lamp  
In the cottage window, that if e'er he gazed  
Homeward by night across the heaving sea  
He might be touched to memory. But she said  
Nothing. The lamp was like the liquid light  
In some dumb creature's eyes, that can but wait  
Until its master chance to see its love  
And deign to touch its brow.

Now in those days  
There went a preacher through the country-side  
Filling men's hearts with fire; and out at sea  
The sailors sang great hymns to God; and one  
Stood up one night, among the gleaming nets  
A-stream with silver herring in the moon,

And pointed to the lamp that burned afar  
And said, 'Such is that *Kindly Light* we sing !'  
And ever afterwards the widow's house  
Was called *The Cottage of the Kindly Light*.

One night there came a storm up from the wild  
Atlantic, and a cry of fierce despair  
Rang through the fishing village; and brave men  
Launched the frail lifeboat through a shawl-clad  
crowd

Of weeping women. But, high o'er the storm,  
High on the hill one lonely woman stood,  
Amongst the thunders and the driving clouds,  
Searching, at every world-wide lightning glare,  
The sudden miles of white stampeding sea;  
Searching for what she knew was lost, ay lost  
For ever now; but some strange inward pride  
Forbade her to go down and mix with those  
Who could cry out their loss upon the quays.

High on the hill she stood and watched alone,  
Confessing nothing, acknowledging nothing,  
Without one moan, without one outward prayer,  
Buffeted by the scornful universe,  
Over the crash of seas that shook the world  
She stood, one steadfast fragment of the night;  
And the wind kissed her and the weeping rain.

\* \* \* \* \*

But braver men than those who fought the sea  
At dawn tramped up the hill, with aching hearts,  
To break her loss to her who knew it all  
Far better than the best of them. She stood  
Still at her gate and watched them as they came,  
Curiously noting in a strange dull dream  
The gleaming colours, the little rainbow pools  
The dawn made in their rough wet oilskin hats  
And wrinkled coats, like patches of the sea.

‘Lost? My boy lost?’ she smiled. ‘Nay, he  
will come!’

To-morrow, or the next day, or the next  
The Kindly Light will bring him home again.'  
And so, whate'er they answered, she would  
say —

'The Kindly Light will bring him home again;'  
Until, at last, thinking her dazed with grief,  
They gently turned and went.

She had not wept.

And ere that week was over, came the girl  
Her boy had loved. With tears and a white  
face  
And garbed in black she came; and when she  
neared  
The gate, his mother, proud and white with scorn,  
Bade her return and put away that garb  
Of mourning: and the girl saw, shrinking back,  
The boy's own mother wore no sign of grief,  
But all in white she stood; and like a flash

The girl thought, 'God, she wears her wedding-dress !

Her grief has driven her mad !'

And all that year

The widow lit the little Kindly Light

And placed it in the window. All that year

She watched and waited for her boy's return

At dawn from the high hill-top: all that year

She went in white, though through the village streets

Far, far below, the women went in black;

For all had lost some man; but all that year

She said to her friends and neighbours, 'He will come;

He is delayed; some ship has picked him up

And borne him out to some far-distant land !

Why should I mourn the living?' And, at dusk,



As if it were indeed the Kindly Light  
Of faith and hope and love, she lit the lamp  
And placed it in the window.

The year passed;

And on an eve in May her boy's love climbed  
The hill once more, and as the stars came out  
And the dusk gathered round her tenderly,  
And the last boats came stealing o'er the bar,  
And the immeasurable sea lay bright and bare  
And beautiful to all infinity  
Beneath the last faint colours of the sun  
And the increasing kisses of the moon,  
A hymn came on a waft of evening wind  
Along the valley from the village church  
And thrilled her with a new significance  
Unfelt before. It was the hymn they heard  
On that sweet night among the rose-lit fern —  
*Sun of my soul*; and, as she climbed the hill,  
She wondered, for she saw no Kindly Light

Glimmering from the window; and she thought,  
 ‘Perhaps the madness leaves her.’ There the  
 hymn,

Like one great upward flight of angels, rose  
 All round her, mingling with the sea’s own  
 voice —

*‘Come near and bless us when we wake,  
 Ere through the world our way we take, —  
 Till, in the ocean of Thy love,  
 We lose ourselves in heaven above.’*

And when she passed the pink thrift by the gate,  
 And the rough wallflowers by the whitewashed  
 wall,

And entered, she beheld the widow kneeling,  
 In black, beside the unlit Kindly Light;  
 And near her dead cold hand upon the floor  
 A fallen taper, for with her last strength  
 She had striven to light it and, so failing, died.

## THE THREE SHIPS

(To an old tune.)

### I

As I went up the mountain side,  
The sea below me glittered wide,  
And, Eastward, far away, I spied  
    On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day,  
The three great ships that take the tide  
    On Christmas Day in the morning.

### II

Ye have heard the song, how these must ply  
From the harbours of home to the ports o' the  
    sky!  
Do ye dream none knoweth the whither and why  
    On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day,  
The three great ships go sailing by  
    On Christmas Day in the morning?

## III

Yet, as I live, I never knew  
That ever a song could ring so true,  
Till I saw them break thro' a haze of blue  
    On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day;  
And the marvellous ancient flags they flew  
    On Christmas Day in the morning!

## IV

From heights above the belfried town  
I saw the sails were patched and brown,  
But the flags were aflame with a great renown  
    On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day,  
And on every mast was a golden crown  
    On Christmas Day in the morning.

## V

Most marvellous ancient ships were these!  
Were their prows a-plunge to the Chersonese  
For the pomp of Rome or the glory of Greece

On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day?  
Were they out on a quest for the Golden Fleece  
On Christmas Day in the morning?

VI

And the sun and the wind they told me there  
How goodly a load the three ships bear,  
For the first is gold and the second is myrrh  
On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day;  
And the third is frankincense most rare  
On Christmas Day in the morning.

VII

They have mixed their shrouds with the golden  
sky,  
They have faded away where the last dreams  
die . . .  
Ah yet, will ye watch, when the mist lifts high  
On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day?  
Will ye see three ships come sailing by  
On Christmas Day in the morning?

## SLUMBER-SONGS OF THE MADONNA

### *PRELUDE*

DANTE saw the great white Rose

Half unclose ;

Dante saw the golden bees

Gathering from its heart of gold

Sweets untold,

Love's most honeyed harmonies.

Dante saw the threefold bow

Strangely glow,

Saw the Rainbow Vision rise,

And the Flame that wore the crown

Bending down

O'er the flowers of Paradise.

Something yet remained, it seems ;

In his dreams

Dante missed — as angels may

In their white and burning bliss —

Some small kiss

Mortals meet with every day.

Italy in splendour faints

'Neath her saints !

O, her great Madonnas, too,

Faces calm as any moon

Glow in June,

Hooded with the night's deep blue !

What remains ? I pass and hear

Everywhere,

Ay, or see in silent eyes

Just the song she still would sing

Thus — a-swing

O'er the cradle where He lies.

I

Sleep, little baby, I love thee;  
Sleep, little king, I am bending above thee!

How should I know what to sing  
Here in my arms as I swing thee to sleep?

Hushaby low,

Rockaby so,

Kings may have wonderful jewels to bring,

Mother has only a kiss for her king!

Why should my singing so make me to weep?

Only I know that I love thee, I love thee,

Love thee, my little one, sleep.

II

Is it a dream? Ah yet, it seems

Not the same as other dreams!

I can but think that angels sang,

When thou wast born, in the starry sky,



And that their golden harps out-rang  
While the silver clouds went by!

The morning sun shuts out the stars,  
Which are much loftier than the sun;  
But, could we burst our prison-bars  
And find the Light whence light begun,  
The dreams that heralded thy birth  
Were truer than the truths of earth;  
And, by that far immortal Gleam,  
Soul of my soul, I still would dream!

A ring of light was round thy head,  
The great-eyed oxen nigh thy bed  
Their cold and innocent noses bowed!  
Their sweet breath rose like an incense cloud  
In the blurred and mystic lanthorn light!

About the middle of the night  
The black door blazed like some great star  
With a glory from afar,

Or like some mighty chrysolite  
Wherein an angel stood with white  
Blinding arrowy bladed wings  
Before the throne of the King of kings;  
And, through it, I could dimly see  
A great steed tethered to a tree.

Then, with crimson gems aflame  
Through the door the three kings came,  
And the black Ethiop unrolled  
The richly broidered cloth of gold,  
And pourèd forth before thee there  
Gold and frankincense and myrrh!

## III

See, what a wonderful smile! Does it mean  
That my little one knows of my love?  
Was it meant for an angel that passed unseen,  
And smiled at us both from above?

Does it mean that he knows of the birds and the  
flowers

That are waiting to sweeten his childhood's hours,  
And the tales I shall tell and the games he will  
play,

And the songs we shall sing and the prayers we  
shall pray

In his boyhood's May,

He and I, one day?

IV

All in the warm blue summer weather  
We shall laugh and love together:

I shall watch my baby growing,  
I shall guide his feet,

When the orange trees are blowing  
And the winds are heavy and sweet!

When the orange orchards whiten  
I shall see his great eyes brighten

To watch the long-legged camels going  
Up the twisted street,  
When the orange trees are blowing  
And the winds are sweet.

*What does it mean? Indeed, it seems  
A dream! Yet not like other dreams!*

We shall walk in pleasant vales,  
Listening to the shepherd's song  
I shall tell him lovely tales  
All day long:  
He shall laugh while mother sings  
Tales of fishermen and kings.

He shall see them come and go  
O'er the wistful sea,  
Where rosy oleanders blow  
Round blue Lake Galilee,  
Kings with fishers' ragged coats  
And silver nets across their boats,

Dipping through the starry glow,  
With crowns for him and me!

Ah, no;

Crowns for him, not me!

*Rockaby so! Indeed, it seems  
A dream! yet not like other dreams!*

v

Ah, see what a wonderful smile again!

Shall I hide it away in my heart,  
To remember one day in a world of pain

When the years have torn us apart,

Little babe,

When the years have torn us apart?

Sleep, my little one, sleep,

Child with the wonderful eyes,

Wild miraculous eyes,

Deep as the skies are deep!

What star-bright glory of tears

Waits in you now for the years  
That shall bid you waken and weep?  
Ah, in that day, could I kiss you to sleep  
Then, little lips, little eyes,  
Little lips that are lovely and wise,  
Little lips that are dreadful and wise!

## VI

Clenched little hands like crumpled roses  
    Dimpled and dear,  
Feet like flowers that the dawn uncloses,  
    What do I fear?  
Little hands, will you ever be clenched in anguish?  
White little limbs, will you droop and languish?  
    Nay, what do I hear?  
I hear a shouting, far away,  
You shall ride on a kingly palm-strewn way  
    Some day!  
But when you are crowned with a golden crown

And throned on a golden throne,  
You'll forget the manger of Bethlehem town

And your mother that sits alone  
Wondering whether the mighty king  
Remembers a song she used to sing,

Long ago,

“*Rockaby so,*

*Kings may have wonderful jewels to bring,  
Mother has only a kiss for her king!*” . . .

Ah, see what a wonderful smile, once more!

He opens his great dark eyes!

Little child, little king, nay, hush, it is o'er,

My fear of those deep twin skies, —

Little child,

You are all too dreadful and wise!

VII

But now you are mine, all mine,

And your feet can lie in my hand so small,

And your tiny hands in my heart can twine,

And you cannot walk, so you never shall fall,

Or be pierced by the thorns beside the door,

Or the nails that lie upon Joseph's floor;

Through sun and rain, through shadow and shine,

You are mine, all mine!



## THE CALL OF THE SPRING

COME, choose your road and away, my lad,  
Come, choose your road and away!  
We'll out of the town by the road's bright crown  
As it dips to the dazzling day.  
It's a long white road for the weary;  
But it rolls through the heart of the May.

Though many a road would merrily ring  
To the tramp of your marching feet,  
All roads are one from the day that's done,  
And the miles are swift and sweet,  
And the graves of your friends are the mile-stones  
To the land where all roads meet.

But the call that you hear this day, my lad,  
Is the Spring's old bugle of mirth

When the year's green fire in a soul's desire

Is brought like a rose to the birth;

And knights ride out to adventure

As the flowers break out of the earth.

Over the sweet-smelling mountain-passes

The clouds lie brightly curled;

The wild-flowers cling to the crags and swing

With cataract-dews impearled;

And the way, the way that you choose this day

Is the way to the end of the world.

It rolls from the golden long ago

To the land that we ne'er shall find;

And it's uphill here, but it's downhill there,

For the road is wise and kind,

And all rough places and cheerless faces

Will soon be left behind.

Come, choose your road and away, away,

We'll follow the gypsy sun;

For it's soon, too soon to the end of the day,  
And the day is well begun;  
And the road rolls on through the heart of the  
    May  
And there's never a May but one.

There's a fir-wood here, and a dog-rose there,  
And a note of the mating dove;  
And a glimpse, maybe, of the warm blue sea,  
And the warm white clouds above;  
And warm to your breast in a tenderer nest  
Your sweetheart's little glove.

There's not much better to win, my lad,  
There's not much better to win!  
You have lived, you have loved, you have fought,  
    you have proved  
The worth of folly and sin;  
So now come out of the City's rout,  
Come out of the dust and the din.

Come out, — a bundle and stick is all

You'll need to carry along,

If your heart can carry a kindly word,

And your lips can carry a song;

You may leave the lave to the keep o' the grave,

If your lips can carry a song!

*Come, choose your road and away, my lad,*

*Come, choose your road and away!*

*We'll out of the town by the road's bright crown,*

*As it dips to the sapphire day!*

*All roads may meet at the world's end,*

*But, hey for the heart of the May!*

*Come, choose your road and away, dear lad,*

*Come choose your road and away.*

## THE LIGHTS OF HOME

### I

PILOT, how far from home?—

Not far, not far to-night,

A flight of spray, a sea-bird's flight,

A flight of tossing foam,

And then the lights of home!—

### II

And, yet again, how far?

Seems you the way so brief?

Those lights beyond the roaring reef

Were lights of moon and star,

Far, far, none knows how far!

### III

Pilot, how far from home?—

The great stars pass away

Before Him as a flight of spray,

Moons as a flight of foam!

I see the lights of home.

## CREDO

### I

THOU that art throned so far above  
All earthly names, e'en those we deem  
Eternal, e'en that name of Love  
Which — as one speaketh in a dream —  
We whisper, ere the morning break  
And the hands yearn and the heart ache,

### II

O Thou that reignest, whom of old  
Men sought to appease by praise or prayer;  
The spirit's little gifts of gold,  
The heart's faint frankincense and myrrh,  
Though we — the sons of deeper days —  
Can bring Thee neither prayer nor praise,

## III

We have not turned in doubt aside,  
Nor mocked with our ephemeral breath  
The little creeds that man's poor pride  
Still fashions in these gulfs of death,  
The little creeds that only prove  
Thou art so far, so far above,

## IV

So far beyond all Space and Time,  
So infinitely far that none,  
Though by ten thousand heavens he climb  
Higher, shall yet be higher by one;  
So far that — whelmed with light — we dare,  
Father, to know that Thou art here.











